



## **\$70,000 Grant Awarded to Jackson State University**

### ***Funds to be used for federal and state information-sharing initiative***

**Jackson, Miss. (June 4, 2012)** – A \$70,000 grant has been awarded to Jackson State University to take part in a federal and state information-sharing initiative. The grant was presented by the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

The grant is being used by the university to fund a pilot program called Discover Mississippi, which will build an interactive map of Mississippi and include the location and status of critical assets such as helicopter landing sites, evacuation routes, shelters, gas supplies, water lines, and power grids. The program will allow federal, state, and local governments to share this data with one another for emergency response purposes. The program is being utilized in eight states — Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Virginia and Tennessee — with plans to add additional states.

“When a disaster occurs, frequently federal, state, and local agencies must work together in developing situations as well as during the aftermath,” said J.W. Ledbetter, Director of the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security. “By taking part in this program, everyone from the local EMT and firefighter to a FEMA official will have access to the same information.”

Ledbetter said the United States Department of Homeland Security has directed state Homeland Security affiliates to use the funding to enhance existing capabilities within individual states for responding to acts of domestic and international terrorism, use of weapons of mass destruction and biochemical agents.

The grant program is part of a federal plan for ‘All-Hazard’ response planning, beginning at local levels. The aim is to improve response capabilities for catastrophic natural disasters, potential for weapons of mass destruction, acts of terrorism, and chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear/explosive incidents. The initiative also improves local response capabilities for traffic agents, fires and other emergencies.

The Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, a division of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, seeks to reduce the state’s vulnerability to terrorism and or any disaster that may occur, minimize the damage, and recover from events that do occur.

For more information go to [www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov](http://www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov).

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